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TAGS: [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: EU PRESIDENCY WAITING FOR UNSC ACTION ON NORTH
KOREA

REF: STATE 169418

Classified By: POLOFF David Schlaefel for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (U) PolOff met with Foreign Ministry Director for Asia Pekka Metso and North Korea Desk Officer Jari Sinkkari Oct. 12 to discuss reftel. Metso had not yet seen reftel due to official travel but Sinkkari had received it prior to the meeting.

ALL EYES ON THE UNSC

¶2. (C) Sinkkari believes that the most useful role the EU can play is to amplify whatever message emanates from the Security Council, because the EU is not a member of the Six Party format. The EU's ties to North Korea are limited to humanitarian aid and KEDO; Metso considers both of these initiatives off-limits from possible sanctions. He drew a distinction between the EU's positions on North Korea and Iran, pointing to the EU's long-standing ties to the Middle East as opposed to its relative lack of leverage with Pyongyang. Metso expressed hope that the UNSC would reach a conclusion "sooner rather than later" regarding the text of a resolution on North Korea as the EU hopes to become politically and substantively involved.

¶3. (C) Metso is looking toward his consultations in Washington Oct. 23-24 with Assistant Secretary Boucher and Deputy Assistant Secretary Stephens regarding North Korea. Metso discussed the "5 plus 5" format developed in Kuala Lumpur but expressed concern that the meeting on the margins of the UN General Assembly was "5 plus 5 minus 2." Metso hopes that his consultations in Washington will include discussion of the future of the "5 plus 5" format or whether it is time for something "completely different."

¶4. (C) Metso explained the EU presidency statement on North Korea as having been drafted as a quick response to the nuclear test because the Presidency wanted to avoid the 24-hour wait necessary for full EU coordination. An EU statement, representing the views of all member states was possible, but not before the UNSC acts.

ANALYZING THE DRAGON AND THE BEAR

¶5. (C) Metso stated that the EU was pleased with the swift, strong statement issued by China immediately following the North Korean nuclear test. He believed that the timing of the test, the day after Japanese PM Abe had met with Chinese Premier Wen and the two had issued a joint statement condemning any North Korean nuclear test, was a blow to Chinese diplomacy in the region and a source of embarrassment.

¶6. (C) The Russian position, by contrast, was much more difficult to predict and measure. Metso believes that Russia is aggressively using its energy influence in the region to extract concessions for every 'good deed'

and that economic decision-making is driving the Russian response. He described the Russian position as "blurred" and a "question mark."

17. Comment: (C) Given the EU's limited leverage and presence in the region, the Finns are clearly looking to Washington for input on how the EU can best calibrate its response and play an effective and complementary role in the current crisis. The GoF is also concerned that Russian maneuvering may be exacerbated by high-level distraction over the Politkovskaya affair. As the situation in the UNSC becomes clearer, Finland will be prepared to use its role as EU President to augment the international community's response.

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